Berrigan Case

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HARRISBURG, Pa. — Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark said today the government never would have prosecuted the Rev. Philip Berrigan if the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover had not forced the issue.

Clark made the remark in closing arguments before Federal Judge R. Dixon Herman on defense motions to overturn the conviction of Berrigan and Sister Elizabeth McAlister for smuggling letters in and out of prison.

"The history of this case is classic as a case of purposeful discriminatory prosecution," Clark said.

Clark said although the government intercepted the letters in the summer of 1970 no action was taken on the case until after November when Mr. Hoover released a statement to the press saying Berrigan and his brother, Daniel, were masterminding a plot to kidnap a high government official.